

Sermon: The World We Live In.
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Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

I am going to begin this morning by looking at Star Wars, we all know the plot good and evil. There is the Force, the good side, "the Force be with you", the Jedi, the Yoda side. Then there is the dark side of the Force, the Darth Vader side, the Sith, the Empire. Yet when we first meet Anakin, he is a young boy who is taken under the wing of Qui-Gon Jinn and later Obi-Wan Kenobi to be trained as a Jedi. But along the way Anakin goes from the good side of the Force to the dark side of the Force and becomes Darth Vader. Now what if we were introduced people to Star Wars, who never saw it before? Then at the end of each episode (with the exception of episode when he dies) and asked them to judge Darth Vader as being either good or evil, what do you think the overwhelming answer would be? Good or evil? Right answer evil. But when Luke Skywalker learns who is father is and Darth Vader learns who is son is what happens at the end? Vader turns into a good guy and saves his son. Up until this episode Darth Vader's good side was unrecognizable. We didn't see it.

Some of man's basic questions about the presence of evil in the world and judging others are covered in this parable. There are both good and evil people in this world and it is difficult for us to be able to tell the difference. In today's Scripture reading we see these things unfold. In this parable Jesus speaks, of the a man who goes to his field and sowed with good wheat seed. Only to have it sowed with weeds by an ene-my during the night. But only when the seeds began to germinate to grow and to bear fruit did it became apparent that there were weeds sowed during the seeding of the field.

The Scripture states, "Then, the man's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, it was good seed you sowed in your field; where did the weeds come from?' 'It was some enemy who did this,' he answered. 'Do you want us to go and pull up the weeds?' 'No,' he answered, 'because as you gather the weeds you might pull up some of the wheat along with them. Let the wheat and the weeds both grow together until harvest. Then I will tell the harvest workers to pull up the weeds first, tie them in bundles and burn them, and then to gather in the wheat and put it in my barn.'" (Matt13:27-30 Good News Translation).

For one moment I want to become a biologist to explain the evil seed. It is know as tares, which resemble wheat when it is a young seedlings and it's almost impossible to tell the difference before it is fully grown and begins to bear fruit. It is a plant form which is slightly poisonous and if eaten could cause dizziness and nausea. When it grows together with the wheat it roots become entwined with the roots of the wheat. If it were rooted up, it would destroy the wheat plant before the fruit became mature. The method used to get rid of it, is to allow it grow along with the wheat and then to harvest it with the wheat. It was then separated from the wheat, bundled together and cast into a flaming fire.

Now it appears in this parable Jesus is comparing two types of people "wheat" the righteous people who sow the word of God in the world and the "tares" or "weeds" those who sow evil and bitterness in the world. So to all of you setting in this Church and those who are watching and listening on their devices, I ask you, are there only two types of people in this world good and bad? Or are there

many people in this world which includes you and I who have two natures within each of us? I believe Jesus is not only talking about two separate groups of people he is also talking about the good and the bad nature in each of us.

Let me use this example, to everyone watching and listening put your hands together as if you are going to pray, palm against palm with fingers pointing in the air. Now entwine your fingers of each hand and now flip your hands over and with your fingers pointing in the air. Think of the Sunday School rhyme, "Here is the Church, here is the steeple open the door and see the people." Now your fingers are entwined, I ask you which fingers have done the wheat actions in your life and what fingers have done the weed things in your life? I believe you cannot tell, because they are a part of you and me and entwined together within in each of us. For we are all children of God but we still have the weed of Adam and Eve within us.

In Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul states, "So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law or my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me." (Romans 7:21-23)

Reverend Lori Wagner a United Methodist Pastor, put it this way, "Jesus calls us, in-stills in us his righteousness and rest, when we agree to follow him. And yet sin's roots still lie deep within our hearts and can easily lead us astray, especially when things get complicated in our world and we can't tell the difference between sin and good. And sometimes they are exceedingly hard to tell apart. In our world today, good can mask as evil. And evil can mask as good. Although we try our best with the help of God to discern which is which, we undoubtedly make mistakes. So it is with humility that Jesus calls us to, a humility that allows us to recognize the inability at times of our judgments to be clear, a humility that encourages us to be cautious with the sentences we make, lest the sin in us begin to thrive."

For you see good and evil exist and grow within each of our personalities and they can become as in Vader's good side, unrecognizable. In the above parable the wheat and the weeds are unrecognizable until they are ready to be harvested. The wheat will bare fruit but the weeds bare none.